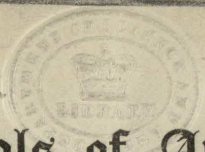


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**Schools of Art :**  
THEIR  
**CONSTITUTION AND MANAGEMENT.**  
COMPRISING  
A STATEMENT OF THE PROGRESS, PRESENT POSITION,  
AND WORKING,  
OF THE  
**BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL AND BRANCH SCHOOLS.**

*A Paper*

READ OCTOBER 15, 1857, BEFORE THE EDUCATION SECTION OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE,  
ASSEMBLED AT BIRMINGHAM.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BROUGHAM,  
PRESIDENT.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR J. S. PAKINGTON, BART, M.P.  
CHAIRMAN OF THE EDUCATION SECTION, IN THE CHAIR.

With an Introductory Chapter,  
ON THE EARLY PROGRESS, CONSTITUTION, AND RESULTS,  
OF  
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF DESIGN.

BY

**GEORGE WALLIS,**

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## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

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WHEN requested by the Committee of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science to prepare a paper on Schools of Art, &c., I hesitated to do so, from a disinclination to enter into any thing like a controversy upon a subject on which I have written and said so much during the past twelve years.

Doubting, however, if I had a right to withhold any information I might be able to give upon a question which, after all, practical experience can alone direct to a successful issue, I have prepared the following paper, together with an introductory chapter on Schools of Design, as, in all probability, a final contribution to the work in which I have now been more or less actively engaged for sixteen years—the promotion of Art-Education as applicable to British Manufactures.





Keeping in view my intended retirement, early next year, from the office I hold as Head Master of the Birmingham School of Art, occasioned by the failure of my health at the end of each winter during the six years I have held the post, and a combination of local circumstances, which appear to me unfavourable to the future successful operations of the institution, I have felt it due to myself and those with whom I have hitherto acted, to place on record the present operations and position of the Birmingham School. It is for this reason the paper is published, not only as the best means of affording precise information to all interested in the question, but also as an anticipatory farewell.

No one can be more conscious than I am of the many shortcomings of the Birmingham School of Art as a full and complete means of providing Art-Education for the people of this important locality, in its application to their every day wants; since no one has had the same opportunities of seeing the question in all its varied aspects. With all these defects, however, it is gratifying to know that a strong feeling prevails amongst those best able to judge, that the operations of the School have been useful to the ornamental trades of Birmingham, to a degree that time alone can fairly demonstrate. In this respect the results must be waited for patiently. Having

laboured so long in this direction, I have already realised the intense satisfaction of seeing youths who at 15 or 16 years of age were students under my care, intelligently carrying out their own special industrial operations as workmen of from 25 to 30, and ever ready to bear testimony to the value of their early training. The last six years' work in Birmingham will bear its full fruits some seven years hence.

The work aimed at, so far as it could be carried out, has been thoroughly and solidly done. Neither my time, nor that of my colleagues in the work of instruction, has been wasted upon making showy demonstrations for the sake of the prizes to be obtained by the students thereby. We have aimed at making good draughtsmen rather than pretty drawings, and have preferred sending our pupils forth intelligently prepared to take their position as art-workmen rather than as *quasi* designers.

For myself, I shall retire from my work, when the time comes, with the priceless satisfaction of having endeavoured to do my duty in a useful direction. The schools over which I have been, from time to time, placed, have ever been the object of my primary attention. Less public zeal and independence of thought and action would probably have secured better personal results; but even as it is, there is much upon which I can congratulate myself and



be very thankful for, since, under any circumstances, I have been permitted the exercise of the humble abilities I possess in a useful and hitherto honoured direction—a privilege that many an abler man has laboured for in vain.

GEORGE WALLIS.

BIRMINGHAM,

October, 1857.

POSTSCRIPT.

By the rules of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, no one must occupy more than twenty minutes in the reading of a paper. As there were many illustrative points of interest, both public and personal, which could not be brought within the prescribed limits, these are added as notes. The same arrangement, for the sake of uniformity, being applied to the Introductory Chapter on the Early Constitution and Progress of Schools of Design.



## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

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THE establishment of Schools of Design, or, as they are now called, Schools of Art, in England, resulted from an Inquiry instituted by a Committee of the House of Commons on Arts and Manufactures, in 1836. After the examination of many eminent artists, manufacturers, and other persons interested in the progressive development of the taste of the people, the Committee recommended that steps should be taken to establish a Central School in London, and, in due course, for opening branch schools in all the great seats of manufacture throughout the provinces. Mr. Poulett Thompson (afterwards Lord Sydenham), then President of the Board of Trade, to which Department of State the schools were to be attached, from the special purpose intended to be effected by their operation, summoned a council of gentlemen to the assistance of the Government,\* and ultimately the central institution was opened in the rooms at Somerset House, just vacated by the Royal Academy, under the title of the School of Design. This unfortunate misnomer, an ultra literal adaptation of the French *L'Ecole de Dessein*, which, in nine cases out of ten, is only intended to describe a Drawing School, was productive of much misunderstanding at a later period, since many persons supposed that the real object of the schools was not so much to teach the merest elements of art, and systematically develop the art-power of the country in the direction of industry, as to teach *designing* to those who

\* The first meeting took place at the Board of Trade on the 19th of December, 1836: the following gentlemen were present—The Right Hon. C. Poulett Thompson, Sir Augustus Wall Calcott, R.A., Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A., C. R. Cockrell, Esq., R.A., Alderman Copeland, M.P., Sir Charles Locke Eastlake, P.R.A. (then Mr. Eastlake, R.A.), H. Bellenden Kerr, Esq., and Apsley Pellatt, Esq.



already practised drawing; and, indeed, in some instances, to teach design without even the preliminary training necessary to its realisation.\*

As may be supposed, the early operations of the new central institution were slow and crude. It was thought a great thing when eight or nine pupils attended the morning classes. The number in the evening was, of course, somewhat larger, since artisans and others whose employments prevented their attendance in the day-time, were but too glad to avail themselves of the privileges offered at night, and ultimately the evening classes became popular and the rooms crowded.

The pecuniary wants of the school were provided for by a small annual grant from Parliament, and a fixed grant of £10,000 to provide casts and other examples of works of art, furniture, fittings of class-rooms, &c., alike for the central as for the intended provincial schools. Very little progress was made towards the establishment of the latter until after the appointment of Mr. Dyce† as Director. The very admirable report of this gentleman to the Board of Trade, on the systems of instruction in art which prevailed on the continent, especially in France and Germany, led to a reconsideration of the whole question, and steps were taken for the formation of a normal class‡ for the special training of the

\* The disappointment experienced in some instances by manufacturers, who had earnestly and jealously promoted the establishment of Provincial Schools of Design, was something ludicrous when they discovered that the alphabet was to be taught prior to original composition in a new language being attempted. On one occasion, the whole committee of a newly established school assembled to witness the unpacking of the cases containing the first instalment of ornamental casts granted by the Government for the use of the school. Each one was desirous that his rival in trade should have no advantage over him in getting the first sight of the models, which all supposed would be directly applicable to the manufacture in which they were engaged. The cases were opened—the lids being partially raised for a first view, after the traditionary manner of the magpie and the marrow bone, but when the classic forms of casts of ornamental fragments of the Erechtheum, a Greek *stèle* or two, and a few Roman scrolls, as illustrations of antique design; a few casts of pilasters from the Tomb of Louis XII at St. Denis, as lessons in the style of the Renaissance, met their gaze, the charm was broken, and their disgust was more visibly expressed on their countenances than they thought it quite politic to express. Some of them, however, took their revenge by systematically neglecting the duties they had undertaken to perform as managers of the school.

† W. Dyce, Esq., R.A.

‡ Early in 1841 the Council put forth its scheme for the formation of this normal class, which was to consist of the holders of six Exhibitions of the annual value of £30 each. The competition was not to be confined to students of the school, but young artists of good character were invited, by advertisement and otherwise, to a three months' probationary trial. From the probationary class the first six Exhibitioners were selected, in January, 1842, and then the normal



future masters of the provincial schools; a metropolitan branch school having been already formed at Spitalfields, in which the instruction was given by two or three senior students from Somerset House.

The first step towards providing suitably trained masters having been taken, the principles on which the proposed provincial schools were to be established and conducted were defined, the mode of giving pecuniary aid decided upon, and the amount of responsibility under which each school was to be placed in relation to the Central School, as distinctly marked as circumstances would allow. The general constitution of each school, and the character of the instruction to be imparted in the classes would, as a matter of course, be similar to that of the Somerset House experiment, since that had arrived at a point, in 1841-2, which, if quietly and gradually, but energetically developed, would have led to results of a far higher character, as regards success and practical usefulness, than has, until recently, characterized the working of metropolitan schools.

Unfortunately, the institution was so constituted that a large

class commenced its operations, which consisted in certain routine studies, indicated by the director, Mr. Dyce, and in assisting in teaching in the evening classes at Somerset House, and in the classes at Spitalfields. The probationers selected for the first six Exhibitions were G. Lambert, A. Patterson, H. Durant, George Thompson, Richard Norbury, and George Wallis. The four first named were all students of the school; the two last were young artists in good practice. In due course these Exhibitioners were all, with one exception (Norbury), who resigned for an appointment not connected with the Government, nominated to Masterships. A new normal class was then formed, of another series of students, but unfortunately the selection was not open to public competition. The six students selected were Silas Rice, James Kydd, William Denby, Adam Findon, T. J. Lingford, and James Brown. Subsequently this mode of selecting and training the future masters was most unadvisedly abolished. Of the twelve young men who formed these normal classes two, since dead, Lambert and Patterson, were admirable teachers. Mr. Rice is the present Head Master of the Potteries School, at Stoke, and Mr. Kydd at Worcester; Mr. Norbury was for a long period Head Master of the Drawing Classes at the Mechanics' Institution, Liverpool, but resigned on their connection with the Department, and is now in excellent repute as an artist. Mr. Denby was for some years an assistant teacher at Somerset House, and subsequently at Marlborough House. Mr. Brown, a student at Spitalfields, during the writer's mastership there, was for a long period a useful teacher in that school, and subsequently head master, until the changes made by the Department. Of the writer's own share in the management of the schools it is not necessary to speak here. Thus out of *twelve* there were certainly *eight* who performed good service in the work to which they had pledged themselves, and no statement of the early progress of Schools of Design would be complete without an incidental record of this fact. The present training classes of the Department of Science and Art have great advantages over this early experiment, alike in funds, and in the fact that popular attention is now called to the question of Art-Education; but the earnestness and special ability shewn by some of these early workers will not be easily equalled, certainly not surpassed.



Council could incessantly interfere with the work of instruction—adopting one scheme one day and abolishing it the next. Then, again, it was composed of gentlemen of varied views, with a strong Royal Academy element, in which anything likely to interfere with the standing of the art-schools of that institution was looked upon with jealousy. Hence a very absurd rule was enacted—"That no person should enter the classes for the purpose of studying as a painter or sculptor;" and to this end the drawing of the human figure was not to be taught, except under very special circumstances. These, like all such restrictions, led to a belief in the students within the school and the public outside, backed as it was by the incessantly reiterated opinions of such artists and writers as Haydon, that there was some special virtue in learning to draw the human figure, and therefore it was to prevent the students learning *too much* that these restrictions were adopted. The effect, in another way, was to raise a storm of opposition on the part of men who, however able they might be as draughtsmen and modellers of the figure, really knew nothing of ornament (the very thing which the schools were established to teach), and who, out of their zeal as artists, and ignorance as ornamentists, set themselves to urge young men to have the figure and nothing but the figure.

This was the case at Manchester, where an independent school was established about the period at which the school at Somerset House was opened, in which the figure was admirably taught by a very able man.\* But, wonderful to relate, the calico prints designs of Manchester did not benefit by the operation! Nor did connecting the school with the Government improve the matter, except in an attempt to teach the elements of ornament, until a total change took place in the system of operations, when the full power of the rule of restriction was obliged to be brought to bear in order to remedy the evil to which its enactment had mainly led.†

The mode of assisting in the establishment of provincial

\* Mr. John Zephaniah Bell.

† When the writer was appointed to the Head Mastership at Manchester, the figure-mania was so great amongst the students, that he found it necessary to insist upon every student beginning with the merest elements of ornament, and it was only after some months of stringent and energetic action that he ultimately, and in defiance of the prohibition of the figure, allowed students to draw it, but never from the flat, and only after they had mastered the round in ornament, and could begin from the skeleton. His conviction that this was the system best adapted to Manchester, ultimately led to his resignation in 1846.



Schools of Design was based upon the common sense principle of "helping those who would help themselves;" and therefore the *first* consideration was that an annual subscription list, guaranteed for three years, the amount of which was equivalent to at least one-half of the estimated annual cost, should be raised by the locality; *secondly*, that a suitable building, separate and distinct in its character, should be provided; and, *thirdly*, that a Committee, composed as much as possible of manufacturers acquainted with the special industrial wants of the district, should be formed, who would pledge themselves to look to the working, financial administration, and discipline of the institution. A subscription of £150 per annum was fixed as a minimum, and, of course, the Government Grant, or subsidy, was also £150. Thus, the lowest annual income adequate to the support of a school was fixed at £300. The maximum grant, or subsidy, was fixed at £250 per annum for large towns and populous localities, and when this was allowed, the annual subscription was required to amount to at least this sum. The appointment of the masters rested with the Council of the Central School, who were responsible for their ability and fitness for their office. A system of visitation was to be carried out by the local committee, and of periodical inspections on the part of the Government.

The rate of class fees was a matter of special arrangement according to circumstances; the error of fixing them too high at first being carefully avoided, for two reasons: 1st, because the artisan class, whom it was especially desirable to attract to the schools, were not in a position to pay high fees; 2nd, because the privilege of receiving instruction at a low fee, rendered the student the more dependent upon the will of the master as to the course of instruction it was most desirable he should pursue, and, without destroying his self-dependence, placed him under an obligation to the public, at whose cost the instruction to be imparted was provided.\* Thus the argument now so frequently used when high fees are paid — "We pay for our instruction, and we will have what *we* want, not what *you* choose to give us," was practically inapplicable.

Such, in brief, was the general principle upon which the provincial schools were originally established. The value of this system, if thoroughly carried out, was, that an equitable principle of self-help and a certain degree of self-reliance were inculcated; the

\* None but those who have had the management of a large school, in which it was desirable to systematically urge students in a given direction, can possibly appreciate the value of the power thus given to the teacher.



Government held the power to guide the educational administration in such a direction as, if wisely carried out, would be most useful to the locality of each school; the chief defect of the system was that no provision was made, beyond that of occasional hurried visits by an inspector, for in any way interesting the manufacturers of any given locality in its success, unless they were members of the committee of the school. The use of such institutions, as might have been expected, was often doubted, and no one seemed to have the power or inclination to seek to prove their value. It was only, therefore, when the master himself took a personal interest in the industry of a district, sought for and obtained introductions to manufacturers, visited their works, and communicated with them and their workmen, that any progress was made. This defect still remains, and is now greater than ever, since in many instances the master is too much engaged, either in the elementary instruction in parochial schools, or in eking out an income by private teaching, to devote any time to acquire a knowledge of the art-wants of the industries around him. The result of this want of a distinct and well defined direction of the influence of the schools from the beginning, was soon felt in the apathy of even those who first interested themselves in them.

Changes were made in the Central School at Somerset House; one director and inspector superseded another; the normal class for the special training of masters was abolished. The consequence was that young artists, innocent of any love for, or knowledge of, ornamental art, with a profound contempt for art-manufacture, great at academy studies, water colour sketches, and conventional landscapes, aspired to the mastership of Schools of Design, because the income was calculated to assist them in their studies, or the position help them to a private connection as drawing masters *a la mode*. Some honourable exceptions might be quoted to modify this apparently sweeping condemnation of so impolitic a change in the mode of appointing masters, but these instances prove that special qualifications and an earnest devotion to special duties were essential to success, and not that incipient academicians were the best masters of Schools of Art established to promote a knowledge of ornamental design as applicable to manufactures.

When changes were made in localities where the schools had made progress and were gradually gaining popularity with the artizan classes, the alteration was on the side of the non-practical, and of course the numbers fell off, and the finances became embar-



rassed.\* It was then supposed an increased grant of money would remedy the evil; and this led to the abandonment of the principle of equivalent self-help, the result being that just as the Government purse opened the local purse closed! The maximum £250 grants were gradually raised to £600.

A system like this was sure to come to an end, and the mode of the end arose out of an inquiry instituted before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1849.

The details of the closing management of Schools of Design appears, now that sufficient time has elapsed to view the question in its true sequence, to belong to the early history of the Department of Science and Art, since the more active opponents of the old system have been, with few exceptions, the most energetic promoters of the new one.

As the paper to which this sketch of the origin and progress of Government Schools of Design is an introduction, will deal with the present constitution of Schools of Art—their action and management, it is not necessary here to follow out the subject beyond endeavouring to draw some instruction from the fate which attended the earlier efforts to diffuse a knowledge of art-education amongst the people of Great Britain.

The problem to be solved was new, and the mode of solution had to be discovered. Continental methods were not adapted to English notions or requirements; a system was therefore required which, whilst *assisting* individual or local efforts, should not *supersede* them. Artistically the want was peculiar, and great ignorance prevailed amongst nearly all classes of people as to what that want really was. No steps were taken by the Council of the Central School, acting for the Government, to give any thing but the most formal, high-dried official information; and when, at the outset of the provincial schools, a little zeal was shewn by one or two of the newly-appointed masters for the information of those amongst whom they had to labour, their efforts were looked upon with jealousy, pooh-poohed, and discouraged. Scheme after scheme was tried, not one having sufficient time given it, in action, to prove its value. The fruits

\* As an illustration of this fact, the Manchester School may be quoted. When the writer resigned his appointment in 1846, the classes of the school were full, with a large number of candidates waiting for admission—the balance in the treasurer's hands being upwards of £400; in three years the school was £200 in debt: thus shewing that £200 per annum had been expended beyond the income. It has been in debt ever since, notwithstanding the raising of the grant to £600 per annum, which was kept up until the establishment of the Department of Science and Art.



were expected before the seed had even begun to germinate, and none but very earnest teachers could bring themselves to go on under such incessant changes. As to the local committees, they were very soon dissatisfied with their share of the work, and the more intelligent members withdrew in disgust. It was only in those cases where the masters had tolerably distinct views of their own, and, setting earnestly to work, took very little notice of the official alterations, that any good was effected. In the majority of the schools, however, the masters were either of that class whose greatest merit is that of always doing precisely as they are ordered, right or wrong; or of that more numerous one which, really caring nothing about the special work they had undertaken to do, looked after their own personal interests by attending to their practice as artists, or as private drawing masters; letting the schools proceed just as they could.

It is an undoubted fact that, in many instances, masters were absent for whole weeks together from their duties, the committee caring so little for the school, that, until some gross instance of breach of discipline, or great abuse of the institution came to their knowledge, they never interfered. It is also an undoubted fact, that earnest masters wrought up their schools to a high pitch of order, discipline, and practical usefulness; and because they had done this in spite of an inefficient official system, and in quiet, though well-understood defiance of a routine totally inapplicable to the wants of the school under their care, they were annoyed by official orders which they could not carry out without compromising themselves with their students. Being misrepresented to the Government they resigned, and, after retirement from their office, were actually charged with having occasioned the very state of things which had solely arisen from the attempt by others to undo that which they had so successfully and usefully effected. It is to be hoped, that this state of things having occurred once, in connection with this question of Art-Education, will never occur again. An impatience of results will always produce incessant changes of system, and when these changes are made in ignorance of the true thing to be aimed at, viz., *the adaptation of the instruction imparted to the industrial wants of the persons to be taught*—the special method will be neglected for any scheme which promises to do the work in an easy and expeditious manner. The real work, however, can only be achieved by earnest, incessant, and painstaking exertion, guided by the intelligence resulting from large experience and careful observation.



## SCHOOLS OF ART,

ETC.

A Paper read before the Education Section of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, October 15, 1857.

THE Government Schools of Design, as originally constituted in 1836, became the subject of a Parliamentary Inquiry in 1849.\*

A considerable number of official gentlemen, manufacturers, artists, the masters of the Central School at Somerset House, and several masters of provincial schools were examined.

The evidence given went to prove that the schools were not of a practical character—that the simplest expedients for imparting special instruction had been neglected—that no attempts, except those arising out of the independent action and zeal of individual masters, had been made to render the course of education suited to the special wants of localities—that manufacturers had learnt to distrust the promises held out as to the ultimate utility of the schools—that country drawing masters found them serious rivals in teaching the prettiness of dilettanti art—and, as a crowning denunciation, it was shewn that the official inspector himself had declared that they were “merely drawing schools.”

The Council, as originally constituted, for the management of the schools, had been abolished by the Board of Trade prior to this inquiry; and a Committee of the Board formed to administer the affairs of the schools throughout the kingdom, assisted by the advice of one or two of the masters

\* See Report of Committee on Schools of Designs: Mr. Milner Gibson, Chairman. House of Commons Paper, 1849.





of the Somerset House School, the Inspector, and Secretary. This mode of management, however, did not appear to be more successful than the former one; and, in March, 1852, a Department of Practical Art, in connection with the Board of Trade, was formed, since called the Department of Science and Art. Its connection with the Board of Trade ceased in 1856, and it is now under the direction of the Privy Council Board of Education; by which it is certainly brought into more intimate connection with the general education of the people.

At first the new department proceeded, in accordance with its title, to establish classes for technical instruction, in which the special requirements of certain industries were to be met. This, as a centralising system, failed of course; since art, as applicable to any given industry, can only be taught in immediate connection with that industry, and the great work still to be accomplished is to seek to make the instruction imparted in the school run as parallel as possible to the practical requirements of the workshop, by endeavouring to educate the boy-worker so that he may gradually develop into the intelligent art-workman. This can only be done, in any useful degree, in localities where special industries are carried on.

From the one extreme, in attempting the technical and special, or, as it has been called, "trade instruction,"\* the Department has gradually arrived at the other extreme, in which the technical is nearly repudiated, and the merest elementary system takes the highest place as the starting point for the future. This is excellent in its way; but why every thing else should stand still until the special adaptation of the instruction can be carried out according to a fixed routine, and in conformity with art-dogmas which may or may not be true, is a question our manufacturers will have a perfect right to ask if they think it worth while to do so.

\* One mode of attempting to achieve this object was the formation, at Marlborough House, of a collection of manufactured articles, in which the ugliness, absurdity, and violation of every principle of true taste in decorative design, as practised in modern manufactures, were illustrated. This most objectionable method of teaching by *negation* was happily very speedily abandoned; for, in this so-called "Chamber of Horrors," a student might waste his time in a vain endeavour to find out the *true* through the agency of the *false*. If sound principles and modes of treatment worthy of imitation cannot be placed before the public to prove *affirmatively* that which is beautiful, and teach it accordingly, it is quite clear that ideas of beauty will never be engendered by a contemplation of the ugly and absurd.



The value of the admirable Museums of Ornamental Art and Library of Works on Art, organized through the agency of the Department, must not, however, be overlooked in their application to the improvement of the practice of the Arts of Design, as applicable to manufacture, so far at least as the metropolis is concerned. An excellent selection from the Museum has, however, been sent for exhibition to several localities in the provinces, and much benefit may yet be derived from the collections now at South Kensington.

The principle of collecting fine works of art-manufacture as objects of study and illustration, was first recognised by the Council of the School of Design at Somerset House, in 1844, when a grant of £1,400 was voted for the purchase of articles from the French Exposition of that year. These were shewn to great disadvantage in the crowded school-rooms, and when, in 1851, the Board of Trade sanctioned the expenditure of £5,000 on objects to be selected from the Great Exhibition of 1851, it became evident that it would be necessary to make special provision for their exhibition to the public. This was done at Marlborough House, and the collections have gradually increased since that period; their removal to South Kensington offering still further facilities for extending so valuable a means of elevating the taste of the people in the decorative arts.

The whole tendency of the operations of the Department of Science and Art has been to approximate the administration of the Schools of Art to that of the general administration of Education Grants by the Privy Council. Masters are again specially trained, but in a more complete and systematic manner than in 1842-3, as regards the elementary course of instruction; and they are certificated after examination in each of the six groups into which the course of study is divided. Inspectors are appointed, whose business, however, appears to be simply to examine the merits of the students' drawings and award prizes. The question of the use of the school, in an industrial aspect, being carefully avoided. Schools are no longer confined to manufacturing localities, but are established wherever a few enterprising individuals care to incur the responsibilities, undertake the management, and conform to the regulations. A system of prize awards has been arranged by which works executed in certain stages of instruction, and from prescribed examples, are examined in each school, and a limited number of the



best rewarded by bronze medals. These again are examined and adjudicated upon in a competition of the whole of the schools, National Medals being awarded to the most successful works, the number of medals obtainable by each school being limited to *five*. Each medal carries with it a grant of works of art, of the value of £10, to the School in which the work rewarded was executed. All works, however, to be eligible for examination or reward, must come within the progressive stages of the course laid down, and be of the official subject and size.

It may be objected that this excess of conformity to a prescribed routine must tend to defeat one of the great practical objects of the schools, *the improvement of our artisans in drawing as applicable to their industrial pursuits*; and that when art, as applied to industries so varied as lace and metal work, calico prints and china painting, carpet weaving and japanning, house decorations and embroidered muslins, is attempted to be taught under one grand centralized system, in which local wants and actualities are to give way to metropolitan theories and systems, it is very like proposing to solve a problem by a repudiation of the means of solution.\*

The reply to this objection usually is, that the execution of the official examples by no means precludes the student from executing such others as may be best adapted to his special and individual wants. This is quite true if the element of *time* is put out of the question; but when it is taken into account that the students engaged in manufactories can attend only after the day's labour is over, and that their time is limited to a few hours per week, it is a mockery to argue as if they had no other employment than to attend to the study of art. Thus, a school working in the interests of a locality is placed at a serious disadvantage in the annual prize competition when compared with schools in which the masters, acting strictly in conformity to the fixed routine, pay no regard to the special industrial wants of the students, however far removed the studies may be from the practice most useful to them. This will account for the great success of female students

\* This would appear to be one of the results of the removal of the Department from its connection with the Board of Trade. Through placing it under the direction of the Education Committee of Privy Council, its special function, if connection with the manufactures of the country, is likely to be lost sight on and its office as a general educator only acknowledged. By judicious administration it might carry out both the *general* and *special* functions, but not by the same agency or in the same manner.



in obtaining prizes, since it is no loss of time to them to execute any thing, however elaborately useless it may be. The oversight of placing schools in which the great majority of the students handle heavy tools for ten or twelve hours every day, in competition with schools in which the students have rarely any other employment than that of attending to their studies, often results in unintentional injustice.

The practical tendency of the present system is to act rather as a premium both to masters and students to neglect the *special* for the *general*, than to place each in its proper position.

In the matter of finance, the mode of rendering pecuniary aid to provincial schools is presumed to be based upon the principle of paying for work done, rather than of providing the means for assisting in work required to be done.

The system of direct money grants or subsidies irrespective of local aid, as carried out during the last three or four years of the old administration of Schools of Design, has been wisely abolished, since experience proved that in too many instances such payments only acted as premiums to inattention in local committees, and that as the Government grant increased the local subscriptions diminished. The wisdom of the new mode of distributing funds has, however, to be proved by experience. This consists in making payments of £10 per annum for each certificate taken by the masters trained under the Department, and employed in any of the schools, the full course of instruction or training being divided into six groups or certificates, but the maximum payment to each master is limited to £50. The most anomalous point in this otherwise well arranged plan is the levelling of all the groups or certificates to one standard of payment. Acquirements necessary to take a certificate in the painting group, the modelling group, and the design group, being each valued at the same rate as the very limited ability necessary to obtain a certificate in the elementary group. The impracticability, too, of securing talents equal to the successful attainment of the six certificates, by a payment of £50 per annum, even in aid of income from fees, must be evident to any person who can appreciate the skilled labour of the artist. The value in the teaching-power likely to exist under such circumstances is, of course, unrecognized in such a remuneration. In short, this system tends to lower the social standing of the art-teacher to such an extent



that men possessing ability worth paying for, still less men of originality or independence of thought, will not care to connect themselves with it.

In further aid of the masters and fees of each school, pupil teacherships\* and prize studentships are assigned to all the schools, in a certain ratio to the number of students. To the former £10 per annum each is paid, with £5 each to the school for fees, as also £5 on each of the prize studentships. These fees are divided in certain proportions between the committee and masters. The master's income may be further increased by a payment of £1. 10s. for each pupil teacher employed in parochial schools, under inspection of the Privy Council, taught drawing by him, and who obtains a prize; and a small payment is also made upon each pupil of a parochial school who takes a prize at an annual examination. This payment has been hitherto at the rate of *one shilling* per pupil, but is to be now raised to *three shillings*.

Such is the present mode by which the Government assists in the payment of masters of Schools of Art appointed under the constitution of the Department. The income of such masters is, therefore, chiefly derived from the fees of the students; and it is to be feared that the instruction imparted is often of a popular rather than of a sound character, in order to attract pupils. In fact, the report of one of the Inspectors for 1856, plainly states that such is the case.†

In the matter of casts, examples, books, &c., the system under the Department is different from that under the Council of the Schools of Design, and, instead of absolute grants, these must be purchased: the requirements of each school being met at a reduced rate of payment nearly equivalent to half price.

In some of the schools, originally established as Schools of Design, payments are still made by the Government to some

\* The practical utility of pupil teachers in Schools of Art, especially in such places as Birmingham, may be questioned. The students selected ought to be the most talented and the most orderly in the school, those to whom the juniors will look up. In the male classes they are better employed than in attending the school for the purpose of assisting in the teaching, and will not forego their own studies for any such purpose. For a time none could be found to take the appointment in the Birmingham School. Two out of the four pupil teacherships are now, however, filled up; but it is with the distinct understanding that they are only to be called away from their own studies to assist in teaching under very special circumstances.

† See Mr. Bowler's Report: Appendix, p. 84. Fourth Report of the Department of Science and Art. 1856.

of the masters upon a personal agreement ; but these cease to individuals on a change of office, and will not be continued to their successors. In every case, however, it has been arranged that the masters have an interest in the students' fees generally, as an equivalent to a reduction of the original salary agreed to be paid to them by the Government. This has a healthy tendency, since it gives every man a pecuniary interest in the amount of work done.

From a return made to the House of Commons last session, on the motion of Mr. Ricardo, the progressive character of the system adopted by the Department is shewn : " Under the old system, only 23 Schools of Design were established in ten years ; whilst, between 1852 and 1856, under the new system, 46 Schools of Art have been provided." As respects the number of students, the following table is arranged from a summary statement in the report :

<i>Year.</i>	<i>No. of Students.</i>	<i>Cost per Student to the State.</i>
1851	3,296	£3 2 4
1852	5,506	2 8 2
1853	17,209	1 4 4
1854	22,154	1 3 4
1855	31,455	0 16 2½

It must be borne in mind, however, in looking at this table, that in the three last items in the column of the number of students, the great majority are simply children learning the mere elements of drawing in parochial schools. This is the great feature of the extension of the facilities for Art-Education under the Department. It is compulsory upon every newly established school that the master should undertake the instruction of a certain number of parochial or public schools of the class under inspection by the Privy Council, and give an elementary drawing lesson of one hour each week, for forty weeks in the year, for a payment of £5.

By a circular notice lately issued, however, the number of schools is abolished as a standard, and 500 pupils, for each of whom sixpence per annum is to be paid in advance by local managers, must henceforth be obtained prior to the establishment of a school, and if *one per cent.* of the population of the town or district is not represented by 500 pupils, then the number to be placed under instruction and so paid for must be *one per cent.* The same circular contains a notice to certificated masters of provincial schools, that unless in August, 1858, the number of pupils of all grades under



instruction is equal to *one per cent.* of the population of the town in which the school is situated, that the payments undertaken to be made by the Department on the certificates obtained by them will be suspended.

That in some rural districts, and comparatively small towns, *one per cent.* may be, and in fact is, under instruction, is true; but when this rule is applied to such places as Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, &c., a plan like this throws such an amount of responsibility upon the masters, for so comparatively small a remuneration, that one can scarcely believe that it is seriously intended to be carried out. In Birmingham, and the surrounding district, where there has certainly been no lack of success in quietly extending the elementary system of instruction, and with a Central School in which there are a much larger number of young men and youths than in any other school in the kingdom, the numbers have never reached to more than *one-half per cent.* of the whole population.

As the present system has been more fully carried out at Birmingham than in any other place in which one of the old established schools existed, its action will be best illustrated in connection with the description proposed to be given of the progress, present position, and working of the Birmingham School.

This school was established in 1843, in connection with the Birmingham Society of Arts, the exhibition rooms of the building belonging to that institution being converted into class rooms. The Government grant amounted to £250 per annum until 1849, when it was raised to £600. The annual subscriptions have averaged £300 per annum until within the last few years, when, from deaths and other causes, it has been reduced to about £200. The building is held almost rent-free, considering its size and position; the only charge which can be placed under this head being a balance of £60 per annum payable on the interest of the mortgage debt. The finances of the school have been in a satisfactory condition for the last seven or eight years, an annual balance remaining in the treasurer's hands. In this respect the Birmingham School has been an exception to nearly every other provincial school, and still is so. In 1851, the discipline of the school had fallen into an unsatisfactory state, and the local committee demanded a change in the head mastership, to which the Board of Trade consented. The appointment was offered

to me, with a request that I would undertake the re-organization of the school. After some consideration I agreed to accept the post, on the completion of the work I was then engaged upon in the Great Exhibition of 1851. Many changes were carried out, and others initiated, prior to the formation of the Department of Practical Art in March, 1852, but the more important financial reforms were effected under the Department. In 1854, I reported upon the re-organization of the school.\* The restoration of order and discipline, and the introduction of a stringent system of elementary instruction, was shewn to have been the first work. Then followed the abolition of all free nominations by donors and subscribers, and the substitution of a half-fee rate; the institution of twelve free scholarships for deserving students was carried out simultaneously with the abolition of the free nominations. These latter had become a serious evil; for as the students got their instruction for nothing, they valued it at about the same rate—that is, at *nothing*! Subsequently the fees of certain classes were raised, at the urgent demand of the Department; but whilst I fully agreed in the necessity for raising the fees, I objected to this being carried beyond the means which each class of students, according to their position in life, might be reasonably supposed to be able to pay. Ultimately a sessional division of the year was made, by which the year was divided into two sessions—a Spring Session of six months from January to June, and a Winter Session of four months and two weeks from the middle of August to December. The fees, as under the quarterly arrangement, to be payable in advance, and at the same rate.

This change was made as an experiment, with a great distrust of its policy, except as a matter of convenience in receiving the fees, and as being likely to promote greater regularity of attendance than a quarterly payment, since the latter had been found to have that advantage over a monthly payment. The fear was that many deserving students would not be able to raise the full amount of a half-year's fee at once; for it was known that many had a difficulty in raising the quarterly fee. As regards the effect upon the numbers, even at first the falling off was very slight, and now the half-yearly payment does not appear to affect the total in any degree. It is to be feared, however, that so much cannot be

\* Report on the Re-organization of the Birmingham School of Art: Appendix to Third Report (1854) of the Department of Science and Art, p. 81.



said as regards the class of boys and youths attending the evening class: the poorer class of artizan boys having nearly vanished from the school. In some instances nominations have been obtained for deserving youths able to pay the half fee. In short, the evening school is not so much of an artizan's school as it was three or four years ago.

The want of room from the increasing number of candidates awaiting admission to the evening classes, necessitated the establishment of a Branch Elementary School, at St. Peter's School Room, Dale End, but the division of the Central School into an elementary and advanced section, the one attending two nights and the other three nights per week, ultimately obviated the necessity for keeping this establishment open, and it was closed in December, 1855. It was found, too, that the collective mode of teaching from the black-board, was very unpopular, and the numbers fell off in consequence. Up to the period of this division, the evening students had the privilege of attending five nights per week, but a careful analysis of the attendance books shewed that practically the average attendance was only two-and-a-half nights; thus half the space of the Central School was lost. The division into sections remedied this defect.

There are still three Elementary Branch Evening Schools open in the district, as will be seen by the return of the public and parochial schools, p. 28.

The management of the Central School is in the hands of a Committee and Secretary, who represent the Donors and Subscribers; an annual meeting to submit a Report, elect officers for the ensuing year, and distribute prizes awarded to successful students, is held at the end of January.

The educational direction and discipline of the school is in the hands of a Head Master, Deputy Head Master, Elementary Master, Modelling Master, and a Teacher of Mechanical Drawing, who is also Elementary Master in the Branch Schools.\* A Keeper, who acts as Librarian, and a Housekeeper, complete the staff of the establishment.

The following statement gives the classes at present in

\* The present masters are—

Head Master and Art Superintendent of the District..	Mr. George Wallis.
Deputy Head Master .....	Mr. Daniel Wood.
Elementary Master and Teacher of Perspective ....	Mr. William Wallis.
Modelling Master .....	Mr. W. H. Sounes.
Teacher of Mechanical Drawing, and Assistant Elementary Master.....	Mr. James Brenan.

operation in the Central School, Birmingham; together with the numbers who entered and paid the fees in each class for the last Spring Session (January to June), 1857:

# CENTRAL SCHOOL, NEW STREET.

## DAY CLASSES.

	Number Attending Class.
1st Female Class: Class hours, Mondays and Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.—Fees, Spring Session, 30s.; Winter ditto, 22s. 6d. ....	36
2nd Female Class: Class hours, Mondays and Wednesdays, half-past 4 to half-past 6 p.m.—Fees, Spring Session, 10s.; Winter ditto, 7s. 6d. ....	79
This Class is strictly confined to those Students who are duly certified, and sign a declaration that they learn drawing to apply it to some educational or industrial purpose.	
Male Afternoon Class: Class hours, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 2 to 4 p.m.—Fees, Spring Session, 15s.; Winter ditto, 11s. 6d. ....	45
Class from King Edward's School: Class hours, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 to 4 p.m. ....	107

A total fee of £150 per annum is paid by the Governors of King Edward's School for 150 students. About 100 usually attend this Class from King Edward's School, New Street, and the privilege, equal to 50 free nominations, is divided between the King Edward's Branch; 25 attending the 2nd Female Class, and 25 the Male Evening Class.

## EVENING CLASSES.

Male Class—Section A: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays—Class hours, half-past 7 to half-past 9 p.m.—Fees, Spring Session, 10s.; Winter ditto, 7s. 6d. ....	217
Male Class—Section B: Tuesdays and Thursdays—Class hours and Fees same as Section A. ....	194
Students are promoted from Section B to Section A according to progress and regularity of attendance.	
Total .....	678

## OPENED JANUARY, 1857.

Special Class for Mechanical Drawing: Class hours, Mondays, 8 to half-past 9 p.m.—Fees, 10s. per Session .....	26
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It will be thus seen that a total of 678 students entered the classes, and paid the fees, during the last half-year; the largest number yet entered at the Central School, for any period since the establishment of the school, 14 years ago.



The financial success of the change, commenced in 1852, may be best illustrated by giving the amounts received for fees, in each year ending June :

1850-1 ..... £164. 4s. 3d.

The year prior to the re-organization of the school.

1851-2.....	£259 6 3	1854-5.....	£615 1 9*
1852-3.....	398 8 3	The first complete year of the change.	
1853-4.....	558 4 2	1855-6.....	533 3 0
One quarter of this year was under the old system.		1856-7.....	575 15 0

The result of the last inspection and examination of the students in January, for the year 1856, was the award of 24 Department Bronze Medals, 30 being the maximum number allowed for award to any one school; and but for a misapprehension on the part of the masters, of the regulations required to be followed in certain stages, by which several excellent works were thrown out of the competition, the full number would probably have been awarded. In the national competition in June, 3 National Medals were awarded to the Birmingham School.

The beneficial effects of a prize system, on such a scale as that now being carried out by the Department, may be doubted.† Experience has shewn that rewards of this character,

\* It has been stated that in the Spring Session of 1857 a larger number of students entered and paid the fees of the Central School than at any period since the establishment of the school. This may appear inconsistent with the return of the amount of fees received in 1854-5 as compared with 1856-7. In the former year, however, the Elementary School, Dale End, was in operation, and a large number of candidates had been waiting some time for admission. This led to a sudden influx of students. Thus the number of students in the *two* schools during the Spring Session of 1854 was 754, and that of the Winter Session 747.

† The prizes range from a small drawing board and T square up to a silver medal, taking in all grades of students. By an analysis of the returns of 42 schools examined to December 30, 1856, leaving eight provincial schools (Birmingham, the Potteries, Macclesfield, and Nottingham, being of the number) and all the metropolitan branch schools unexamined until early in 1857, the number of prizes awarded were—

Students of 42 Schools of Art..	367	Bronze Medals.
Schoolmasters, Schoolmistresses and Students in Training Colleges .....	416	Cases of Mathematical Instruments.

Pupils of Public and Parochial Schools :

First Grade .....	905	Books, or Water Colour Boxes, &c.
Second Grade .....	364	Drawing Boards and T Squares.

Total prizes 2052 in 42 Schools.



if carried too far, are injurious to the future progress of the student. Many a clever youth has been checked in a promising career by premature success; and I have ever urged upon my own students to remember that the power to do well that which they have studied to do, is the best and most permanent of all rewards, and will ultimately bring most honour with it.

The action of the drawing classes established in public and parochial schools, with the exception of those attended by the very poorest class of children, has been very satisfactory. In these latter, the constant change, through the removal of the children at an early age, is a great drawback to the successful working of a class in which only *one* hour's instruction per week is given; and it may be reasonably doubted if in these cases the £5 fee, low as it is, may not be better expended.

I have deemed it right to encourage, as far as possible, the teaching of drawing by the masters and pupil teachers of these schools, rather than through the employment of a special teacher.\* Two of the schools formerly under instruction from the Central School, are now taught by the masters of the schools themselves, and in a recent visit to both for the purpose of satisfying myself of the result, I have no hesitation in saying that they are as well taught as the age and class of pupils will permit.†

The following table shews the schools under instruction during the half-year ending 30th June, the number of hours and lessons, the number of pupils learning drawing, and the number of pupils in the school. The three classes named under the head of evening schools are attended chiefly by boys and young men engaged in industrial pursuits during the day, and, therefore, approach in character the evening elementary class of the Central School. This is more especially the case with the schools at Spon Lane and the Cape, as the distance from Birmingham prevents many youths from attending the Central School who would otherwise be glad to do so.

\* My own efforts in the direction of the education of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in drawing, so early as 1846, were made in the hope that the time would come when linear drawing would form part of the regular course of instruction in every parish school. Thanks to the efforts of the Department and General Education Board, this seems now likely to be progressively realized, since nearly every reasonable facility and encouragement is given for the promotion of so desirable a result.

† One of these masters has now left the school in which he was engaged, and the drawing class is broken up.



TABLE REFERRED TO, P. 27.

NAME AND LOCALITY OF  SCHOOL.	NO. LEARNING DRAWING.			No. of Hours and Lessons per Week.		NO. ATTENDING THE SCHOOL.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.			Males.	Females.	Total.
				Less.	Hrs.			
DAY SCHOOLS:								
Bath Row—Branch of King Edward's School .....	30	30	60	1	2	136	144	280
Meriden Street ditto.....	30	30	60	1	2	130	130	260
Edward Street ditto .....	28	35	63	1	2	125	120	245
Gem Street ditto .....	30	30	60	1	2	120	120	240
St Philip's School .....	43	33	76	1	1	60	50	110
Blue Coat School .....	30		30	2	1ea.	110		110
St. John's Deritend .....	44		44	1	1	120		120
Wesleyan School, Westbrom- wich .....	92	3	95	1	2	200	100	300
National School, Saltley .... (Model School, Training College.)	20		20	1	1	100		100
Training College for Diocese of Worcester, Saltley, near Birmingham .....	43		43	1	2	43		43
EVENING SCHOOLS:								
Spon Lane (Messrs. Chance's) School .....	40	10	50	1	2	200	150	350
Cape Street, Smethwick ..	32	3	35	1	2	32	3	35
Cambridge Street Works' (Messrs. Winfield's) School	20		20	1	1½	200		200
Total.....	482	174	656			1576	817	2393

It will be thus seen that the number of pupils under instruction in drawing, in the Birmingham district for the last session ending 30th June, 1857, was—

Central School .....	678
Public and Parochial Schools .....	656

Total .....

1334

In the above table, the number of pupils attending each school is given in addition to those learning drawing, because from the numbers given in official returns as learning drawing in parochial schools, in connection with some of the provincial Schools of Art, it would appear that the whole number in each school was returned, rather than those only who are under instruction in the special class.\* For it is not

\* As an illustration, the return from Chester gives 1232 in a list of schools, and of the number of pupils attending them, corrected to March, 1857. In the Inspector's Report (Appendix to Report of Department of Science and Art, 1856, p. 188) it is stated, that *the whole* of the pupils learning drawing in the parochial schools at Chester were examined, instead, as in most other places a selec-

probable that eight schools, at Chester, would have 1,232 pupils under instruction in drawing; seven schools at Cheltenham, 1,304 pupils; and seven schools at Bristol, 1,736 pupils; whilst in Birmingham, where certainly the value of a knowledge of drawing is perhaps more highly appreciated for its practical utility than in any other town in the United Kingdom, there would be only 683 in fourteen schools for the same period. The validity of the return of the numbers really under instruction seriously affects the value of the return made to Parliament, on the motion of Mr. Ricardo, already alluded to, in which the average cost per student for the whole kingdom is given. In this return it is stated that the total number of persons under instruction in drawing, through the agency of the Department, in 1855-6, was 31,455, and that the average cost to the State per student was *sixteen shillings and twopence-halfpenny*. As a matter of course, if numbers were returned who were not under instruction, but who simply attended at the schools in which the instruction was given, the cost per student must have been much higher. Taking, however, this 16s. 2½d., let us see how this compares with Birmingham.

The amount of State assistance granted to Birmingham in 1855-6, as per the same return, was £522. 5s. 8d. direct payment, and £125 as the proportion to each school of £6,500, the sum put down under the head of "prizes and examinations, travelling and incidental expenses, and salaries for inspection," making a total of £647. 5s. 8d. The number of students for that period was 1451: this gives an average of 8s. 11d., or 7s. 3½d. per student *less* than that of the whole kingdom. It must be borne in mind, too, that the proportion of youths connected with the industrial operations of Birmingham is much greater than that of any other place; excepting Sheffield, where there are very few pupils under instruction in parochial schools.

tion of them, the number being given as 615: the number of schools being 8. At Cheltenham, where only seven schools are returned, the number is stated in the Report, 1856, Appendix, pp. 206-7, as 1,392; and pp. 210-11 as 1,233; but these include the Central School, the numbers of which are given at 2,409 in the list above named (March, 1857), the number in the parochial schools being given at 1,304. Similar discrepancies characterize the returns from Bristol and Manchester; in the latter case, the number attending the central school is given at 231, in the Report (Appendix, pp. 208-9), and 780 in the list issued for the use of schools; 737 being the number given in the Report (Appendix, pp. 210-11).



Thus, taking an abstract of the employments of some of the senior students, there were last session—

9 Brass Founders; 12 Chasers; 34 Die-sinkers; 46 Engravers; 5 Glass Painters; 14 Jewellers; 20 Japanners; 10 Lithogra- phers; 7 Modellers; and 6 Silversmiths.....	Total	143
Connected with the Building and Furnishing Trades .....		33
Engaged in miscellaneous Industrial Occupations .....		74
Schoolmasters, Pupil Teachers, Students in Training at Diocesan Training College .....		61
	Total Males	311
16 Female Pupil Teachers; 11 Governesses; 24 Monitors from King Edward's Branch Schools .....	Total Females	51

The cost of instruction of each of these, even at the general average of 16s. 2½d., is very low, as compared with that rate, as the cost for each child of eight or ten, who in reality form the great bulk of the total, 31,455.

One or two of the classes named in the preceding list of public and parochial schools, call for special remarks.

First in importance is that of the Training College for the Diocese of Worcester, at Saltley, near Birmingham. The importance of encouraging young men in training for schoolmasters, in the practice of free hand drawing, graphic geometry and perspective, cannot be too readily overrated in relation to the subject under consideration; and it is certainly only fair to state, that with only half the time devoted to the study of drawing usual in other Training Colleges, that at Saltley has stood very high at every examination, and at the last, 4 per cent. higher than any other College taking the full course of instruction, and 22 per cent. above the average of the whole. There is, however, one very serious defect in the character of the instruction given to these young men, and this is the non-recognition of their power to draw on the vertical black-board; a most important requisite in a schoolmaster. It seems to be altogether forgotten that a man may draw exceedingly well on paper, and like many an able artist fail to make an intelligible diagram with white chalk on a black-board.\*

\* When the Class from Saltley College attended at the School of Art, by invitation, for a weekly lesson, prior to the arrangements of the Department for its regular instruction at the College being made, the class was divided into three portions, and each portion devoted one-third of the lesson to black-board practice—first drawing the rectilinear letters of the alphabet, as I A H, then the curvilinear, as C O S, and subsequently those composed of both lines, as D P R. As, however, no examination takes place as to the power of the student in this direction, and their time is generally so very limited, this practice has been abandoned. I should consider no schoolmaster fit for his post, certainly not as a teacher of drawing, unless he could draw intelligently with white chalk on the vertical black-board.



One of the great drawbacks to the progress of the pupils in parochial schools is the early period at which many of the children are removed from school, as already named. The value of regular attendance in the drawing classes, is proved in a remarkable manner by the progress made by the boys of the Blue Coat Charity School. The class in this Institution gets two lessons, of an hour each, per week, the progress made being three or four times greater than in some classes in which twice the time is given. The practical result is that several boys who have recently left the school, have been enabled to take situations for which otherwise they would not have been qualified.\*

As may be supposed from the numbers under instruction, the collective system of training in classes from black-board drawings and diagrams is largely used in the elementary stages. This works very well, up to a certain point, in the public and parochial schools. Its failure to interest and satisfy older pupils has been already alluded to in connection with the experiment of the Elementary School at St. Peter's, Dale End. Its advantages, when properly carried out, are economy in teaching-power, and the distinctness with which the pupil must follow out the principles of construction, shewn by the gradual development of the figure to be drawn; a point in which much depends upon the tact of the teacher. Experience, however, has shewn that, with every advantage in this respect, the individual system has to be resorted to at a much earlier period than the advocates of the ultra collective method suppose, otherwise the pupil loses interest in his work. The collective system discovers the capacity of the pupil, but fails

\* The value of sound elementary instruction in drawing in Schools of this class, in which the orphan children of intelligent artisans are educated, may be illustrated by quoting the result of an experiment in connection with the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Manchester. In 1845, I proposed to the Committee of that Charity to select a class of boys to whom the privilege of attending the School of Design should be given free by the Council, a friend undertaking to find the requisite drawing materials, also free. Six boys, and a youth intended for a teacher, were selected. The teacher is still connected with the Deaf and Dumb Institution, and regularly instructs a class in drawing there. Of the six boys, now young men, two are designers to calico printers, one is an engraver to calico printers, and a first-rate workman, another is a wood carver of considerable ability, the fifth is a lithographic draughtsman, and the sixth, on leaving school and returning to his friends, who resided in a rural district, having no field for his knowledge of drawing industrially, is the only one who can be said not to have made the instruction he received useful to his future progress in life. Of the seven, six have been employed in a manner in which their knowledge of drawing has been of great service to them.



to meet that capacity when shewn. If the power of the pupils, or even classes of pupils, were all developed in a given ratio, all would go well, and a most economical system of teaching free-hand drawing might be easily worked out, but beyond a certain point this manifestation of power is so varied, that nothing but the individual system will meet the difficulty, and the teacher has to grapple with the peculiarities of each student as best he may. To do so in a collective class would be impossible. Nor should the exhaustive nature of the work be overlooked. To this point little or no consideration has been given; for it has been assumed that the master may commence at nine o'clock in the morning, and go on, with a series of collective or individual classes, until half-past nine o'clock at night, and yet do justice to all his pupils! Of course the defects here pointed out in the collective method of teaching do not apply to instruction in geometry, perspective, or the elements of mechanical drawing.

It will now be asked, and the question is a fair one, "What have been the practical results of the School of Art in Birmingham, especially in relation to the industrial operations of the town and district?" The reply must be that these results are not to be seen on the surface, or to be proved *in* the school. They are only to be found in the workshop and manufactory, where the young men who have from time to time passed through the classes of the school—attending, of course, for varied periods, and with as varied results—are employed. That the influence it has exercised, certainly within the last five or six years, is very considerable, I am satisfied, from close personal observation, and the acknowledgment of scores of persons who have been benefited by what they have learnt. That all has been done that could be desired is another matter. Certainly so much has not been done as might have been done under a more free and specially adapted system, or as would have been effected if students had not been so easily satisfied with what they had learnt.

In the matter of design, about which so many platitudes are written and spoken, it seems now quite clear that comparatively little can be done in the school, at least, so as to be made distinctly evident. That nothing is done is quite another question. An intelligent and earnest teacher can from time to time influence thoughtful young men, and even their employers, by a few distinct enunciations of principles and modes of application, such as can never be given in a formal



manner in class. The results will be quiet attempts at design which neither the student nor his employer will allow to be shewn in the school, and if it were possible to collect all such students into one class, set them down to design, and the results were ever so satisfactory, not one of them would shew the result of his skill and power in the school. In fact, the more satisfactory the result, the more jealously would the producer guard it. The commercial question here comes in; the employer will not permit his property in the talent of his apprentice to be publicly exposed, as suggestive to his rivals in trade; and therefore as technical design can only be tested by the actualities of manufacture, so if the results of these schools are only to be proved through the exhibition of original power in the students at annual exhibitions, then such proof will be a very long time before it is forthcoming, if ever.

The best and most palpable proof of the usefulness of the school is in the increased intelligence and aptitude for art in the young workmen who, having passed through the course of instruction, find that they are of more value to themselves and employers, and consequently to the community in which they live. Such, taking their talents into the labour market, find ready and profitable employment. They, therefore, do not stay in the school long enough to make any great demonstration of their power, and when I state that the best works of the Birmingham School have usually been the productions of youths of from 16 to 20 years of age, and that only two, during my mastership, have sought to make use of the teacherships of the Department of Science and Art as a means of obtaining a livelihood, it must appear likely, at all events, that whilst on the one hand nothing very striking or original could be produced by such youths, yet it must be also equally evident on the other, that they found profitable employment for their knowledge and ability, without travelling out of the sphere of their homes.

It is sometimes erroneously supposed that because a School of Art has been in operation for a number of years, that therefore the productions of its students ought to be of a progressive character, and each successive year show proofs of increased talent and power. If students continued to attend, labouring as adults where they had studied as boys, such might be the case; but it should be borne in mind that a school is not older than the average period of attendance



of its most advanced classes. At the present time there are not more than twelve male students in the Birmingham School who were in the classes when I became head master, six years ago. Of these, six were at that period elementary students, and have now worked up to the higher grades, four others having returned to the school to further improve themselves after long absences.

Nor must it be forgotten that talent in Schools of Art, as in other educational establishments, and even in whole communities, often manifests itself in cycles. In my own experience, now ranging over sixteen years, I have had the satisfaction, at some periods, of congratulating myself and those with whom I acted, on a concentration of talent; and at other times I have had to contend with a dead-level of hopeless mediocrity.

That manufacturers and others, whose daily pursuits require a knowledge of the principles and practice of decorative art, have not taken so much interest in the success of these Schools of Art as they ought to have done, nor rendered them that pecuniary support, and, above all, personal assistance, which could have been desired, is quite true. Nay, that there are many who doubt their value, and care little whether they progress or not, is equally certain. But when we take into account the absurd position in which this question has been placed by the use of puerile arguments, as to the value of picture exhibitions, and instruction in drawing the mere prettinesses of fashionable landscape art, as a means of cultivating the taste of the people in correct principles of ornamental design, it is not wonderful that the practical minded men, who have to deal with the realities of our industries, become obstinate unbelievers in the value of any artistic instruction whatever, in relation to their specialities. Hence the apathy of which so much complaint has been made, and which has resulted in the Government almost abandoning any future attempt to carry out an experiment for imparting that instruction, which is becoming every year of more and more importance to our position as a commercial people.

That some manufacturers in Birmingham appreciate the teachings of the schools is proved by the fact that they have been influenced to insert in the indentures of apprentices, recently engaged, a clause to the effect that the parents are to see that the youths attend the School of Art, or some drawing class, for the purpose of learning to draw during their apprenticeship.

The masses are unfortunately indifferent to sanitary measures, and even general education itself; but shall all movement, even if compulsory, cease until those who are to be benefited desire the work to be done, and will assist therein? Certainly not. It is the business, as it is the highest interest, of those charged with the conduct of public affairs to seek to do all that can be done for the general benefit, without waiting for the general assistance, or even the general approval, in effecting those objects which, out of a superior intelligence, they are convinced are for the public good.



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